

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ4183

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	SRPP-00	DS-00
	VC-01	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00
	AC-01	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00
	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SCT-00	SP-00	IRM-00	TRSE-00
	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5781  
INFO NSC WASHDC  
SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 002120

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S RICE, AF POAS POWELL,  
AF DAS  
SCHNEIDMAN, AF/S DIRECTOR RENDER, AF/S DESK  
OFFICER GURNEY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 4/17/10

TAGS: PREL PGOV ZI

SUBJECT: WEEKEND VIOLENCE NOTCHES UP  
POLITICAL TENSION

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CLASSIFIED BY POLITICAL OFFICER JON HOOPER  
FOR REASONS 1.5 (B), (0)

11. (C) SUMMARY. THIS WEEKEND SAW THREE DEATHS ASSOCIATED WITH POLITICAL ACTIVITY, APPARENTLY THE START OF WHAT MANY OBSERVERS THINK WILL BE A SEASON OF ELECTION-RELATED VIOLENCE FOR ZIMBABWE. PRESIDENT MUGABE REMAINS INTRANSIGENT IN DEFYING THE COURTS OVER ONGOING FARM OCCUPATIONS, AND APPEARED UNMOVED BY THE DEATHS. HIS MAIN POLITICAL OPPOSITION CONTINUES TO APPEAR MORE NIMBLE THAN MUGABE IN ATTEMPTING TO GARNER POLITICAL SUPPORT. WE FORESEE NO QUICK END TO THE SPORADIC VIOLENCE. END SUMMARY.

SOWING THE DRAGON'S TEETH

12. (U) TWO MEMBERS OF THE MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (MDC), THE MAIN POLITICAL OPPOSITION PARTY, WERE KILLED APRIL 15 IN WHAT LOCAL OBSERVERS BELIEVE TO BE A POLITICALLY-INSPIRED ATTACK. ONE OF THE DEAD WAS THE OFFICIAL CHAUFFEUR FOR MDC LEADER MORGAN TSVANGIRAI. HE HAD BEEN TRANSPORTING MDC SUPPORTERS HOME FROM A POLITICAL RALLY WHEN HIS TRUCK WAS ATTACKED AND STOPPED BY GUN-TOTING ASSAILANTS, WHO PROCEEDED TO FIREBOMB THE VEHICLE. THE TWO DECEASED WERE TRAPPED IN THE TRUCK AND DIED

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OF BURNS. THE SUPPORTERS THAT HAD BEEN  
PASSENGERS ESCAPED LARGEY UNHARMED.

13. (C) ALSO ON APRIL 15, A WHITE FARMER WAS SHOT TO DEATH IN A CLASH WITH SOME OF THE SO-CALLED "WAR VETERANS" WHO HAD BEEN OCCUPYING HIS FARM. THIS FIRST FARMER CASUALTY OF THE GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED OCCUPATION CAMPAIGN RESULTED WHEN THE FARMER BACKED UP HIS LABORERS TO ATTEMPT TO GET THE OCCUPIERS OFF HIS FARM. WHILE HE AND HIS LABORERS WERE INITIALLY SUCCESSFUL, THE OCCUPIERS, WITH HELP FROM OTHERS IN THE AREA, REORGANIZED AND COUNTERATTACKED. IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE OCCUPIERS ARE PREPARED TO ESCALATE VIOLENCE IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THEIR PRESENCE AGAINST FORCEFUL ATTEMPTS BY FARMERS TO EVICT THEM AND HAVE ORGANIZED THEMSELVES TO A CERTAIN DEGREE.

MUGABE DEFIANT ON FARM OCCUPATIONS

14. (C) PRESIDENT MUGABE RETURNED ON

SUNDAY, APRIL 16, FROM THE G-77 SUMMIT TO A RENT-A-CROWD RECEPTION AT HARARE AIRPORT, WHERE HIS PUBLIC REMARKS UNDERLINED HIS INTRANSIGENCE ON THE LAND OCCUPATION ISSUE. CONTINUING THE LINE OF ARGUMENT HE MADE AT THE SUMMIT, MUGABE MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE WILL NOT SUPPORT ATTEMPTS TO CLEAR THE OCCUPIERS FROM THE FARMS, MUCH LESS ORDER

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POLICE TO FOLLOW THE RECENT COURT ORDERS THAT THEY SHOULD DO SO. THIS CAME IN COMPLETE CONTRAST TO ACTING PRESIDENT MSIKA'S APRIL 14 DECLARATION THAT THE COURT'S RULING TO WITHDRAW FROM THE OCCUPIED FARMS SHOULD BE HEEDED. IN WHAT MUST HAVE STRUCK MORE THAN A FEW IMPARTIAL OBSERVERS AS A NEW LEVEL OF HYPOCRISY, MUGABE ARGUED THAT ENFORCING THE COURT ORDERS WOULD BE A DANGEROUS ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE.

15. (C) PART OF MUGABE'S AND THE POLICE'S ARGUMENT AGAINST HAVING THE POLICE FORCE MOVE AGAINST THE FARM OCCUPIERS HAS BEEN THAT THE POLICE LACK THE NECESSARY RESOURCES. CURIOUSLY, WHEN RUMORS FILLED HARARE THAT A NON-ZANU-PF POLITICAL RALLY WAS PLANNED FOR SATURDAY, THE POLICE HAD NO DIFFICULTY MAKING THEIR PRESENCE KNOWN. THERE WERE ROVING PATROLS OF RIOT-EQUIPPED OFFICERS IN THE DOWNTOWN BUSINESS AREA, MOVING IN GROUPS OF FIVE TO TEN. FURTHER POLICE MANPOWER LOUNGED IN SEVERAL ARMORED CARS PARKED NEAR PARLIAMENT, AND POLICE

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	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00
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R 171532Z APR 00  
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5782  
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ROADBLOCKS ON MAJOR TRAFFIC ARTERIES HEADING INTO TOWN CAUSED MAJOR TRAFFIC BACK-UPS AS OFFICERS SLOWLY SEARCHED OR INSPECTED THE INTERIOR OF ALL PASSING VEHICLES. IN THE END THERE WAS NO DEMONSTRATION--WE HAVE BEEN TOLD NONE WAS IN FACT PLANNED--AND HARARE'S FINEST, RARE RESOURCE THAT THEY APPARENTLY ARE, SIMPLY HAD A LONG DAY OF DOING NOTHING MUCH.

16. (C) FURTHER TO THE LAND ISSUE, THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER IN HARARE TOLD AMBASSADOR McDONALD DURING LUNCH ON APRIL 17 THAT THE BRITISH HAVE PROPOSED TO THE GOZ THAT THEY SEND A DELEGATION TO LONDON ON APRIL 27 FOR BILATERAL LAND REFORM DISCUSSIONS.

MDC STILL THINKING AHEAD, ZANU-PF NOT

17. (C) IN THE MORE PURELY POLITICAL ARENA, THE MDC SPONSORED ADS IN MAJOR NEWSPAPERS THIS WEEKEND URGING THEIR URBAN-BASED SUPPORTERS TO PICK UP INFORMATION PAMPHLETS TO TAKE WITH THEM AS THEY RETURN TO THEIR RURAL FAMILIES OVER THE UPCOMING LONG EASTER WEEKEND. AS IS COMMON IN MANY AFRICAN COUNTRIES, MANY EXTENEOE FAMILIES WILL GATHER IN THEIR VILLAGES THIS HOLIOAY. BY HAVING INFORMATION PACKETS REAOY TO BE  
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TRANSPORTED BY THESE WILLING--ANO FREE-- COURIERS, THE MOC IS TAKING A SMALL STEP TO OVERCOME THE COMMUNICATION GAP THAT SEPARATES THEM FROM RURAL AREAS, WHERE ONLY THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLEO ELECTRONIC MEDIA IS REAOILY AVAILABLE.

18. (C) IN CONTRAST, NEWS FROM THE ZANU-PF FRONT SHOWS THEY HAVE A CONSIDERABLE OISTANCE TO GO BEFORE THEY ARE IN TUNE WITH THE MOOO OF THEIR PUTATIVE SUPPORTERS. ACCOROING TO NEWS REPORTS MONOAY MORNING, VICE PRESIOENT MSIKA WAS BOOEO OVER THE WEEKENO WHEN HIS SPEECH AT THE FUNERAL OF THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF BULAWAYO STRAYED INTO AN ATTACK ON MDC PRESIDENT TSVANGIRAI.

COMMENT

19. (C) THE NO-HOLDS-BARRED POLITICAL SEASON IS NOW APPARENTLY OPEN IN ZIMBABWE. OUR READING OF LOCAL REACTION TO THE WEEKEND VIOLENCE IS THAT THERE IS CONSIDERABLE SHOCK AND DISMAY THAT THINGS HAVE COME TO THIS PASS. NO ONE IS LOOKING TO A QUICK END TO WHAT LOCALS SEE AS A ZANU-PF INTIMIDATION CAMPAIGN.

110. (C) THIS IS A TIME OF TESTING FOR THE MDC. THEIR RESPONSE TO WHAT APPEARS TO BE BLATANT AND CLEARLY LIFE-THREATENING  
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PROVOCATION WILL BE TELLING. SO FAR THEIR OFFICIAL REACTION HAS BEEN LOW KEY. WE HAVE NOT HEARD OF PLANS FOR RETALIATION. IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO TELL WHAT EFFECT THESE EVENTS WILL HAVE ON THEIR SUPPORTERS, BUT WE SENSE MANY VOTERS HERE EXPECTED POLITICAL CONFLICT TO CAUSE LOSS OF LIFE EVENTUALLY, AND WILL NOT BE PUT OFF BY SPORADIC VIOLENCE.

111. (C) FOR ZANU-PF, THE TIME TO RESCUE WHATEVER POLITICAL CREDIBILITY THEY HAVE IS NOW. WE SENSE THERE ARE CONSIDERABLE RIFTS WITHIN THE RULING PARTY OVER THE FARM OCCUPATIONS. VICE PRESIDENT MSIKA SURELY WAS NOT SPEAKING SOLELY FOR HIMSELF WHEN HE GREETED WITH SOME APPARENT ENTHUSIASM LAST WEEK'S COURT DECISION THAT POLICE SHOULD EVICT THE FARM INVADERS--A BLATANT CONTRADICTION OF WHAT, SINCE MUGABE HAS SPOKEN, IS NOW OFFICIAL PARTY POLICY. WE DO NOT KNOW HOW FAR THESE POLICY SPLITS RUN ON OTHER ISSUES, BUT POLITICIANS WHO EXPECT TO HAVE A CAREER HERE BEYOND THE MUGABE ERA

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MUST BE LOOKING WITH SOME CONSTERNATION AT  
THE CURRENT GROWTH OF CHAOS. MOREOVER, THE  
LONGER AND MORE SEVERE THE VIOLENCE, THE  
GREATER WILL BE THE DIFFICULTY IN FINDING  
ANY TAKERS FOR THEIR ASSERTION THAT  
ELECTIONS WILL BE FREE AND FAIR.

112. (C) AMBASSADOR MCDONALD LEARNED LATE  
THIS AFTERNOON IN A TELEPHONE CALL WITH DR.  
CHARLES UTETE, CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE  
CABINET, THAT PRESIDENT MUGABE MAY HAVE AN  
ANNOUNCEMENT TODAY REGARDING THE LAND  
OCCUPATIONS, WHICH HE SAID "MAY BE OF  
INTEREST TO US." WE WILL LET YOU KNOW IF  
SUCH AN ANNOUNCEMENT IS MADE. END COMMENT.

MCDONALD

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